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## Canada

### Livestock and Products

### Increased Access for U.S. Feeder Cattle

**2004**

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**Report Highlights:**

Canada has announced its intention to increase access for U.S. feeder cattle from 39 states. Canada's Agriculture Minister, Bob Speller announced that Canada will remove anaplasmosis and bluetongue testing and treatment requirements from feeder cattle imported from the United States enabling year-round access to Canadian feedlots.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
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Summary: Canada has announced its intention to increase access for U.S. feeder cattle from 39 states. Canada's Agriculture Minister, Bob Speller announced that Canada will remove anaplasmosis and bluetongue testing and treatment requirements from feeder cattle imported from the United States enabling year-round access to Canadian feedlots.

Comment: Before the increased access could be realized, Canada will have to revise the current list of exemptions under its BSE import restrictions. Currently, only U.S. bovines for immediate slaughter are permitted entry into Canada under BSE control measures.

Prior to the rule change, Canadian feedlots could only import U.S. feeder cattle from 8 designated states during the winter period October through March when the opportunity for vectors to spread disease is considered negligible. During the 2000-2001 winter period, the U.S. exported more than 210,000 feeder cattle to Canada valued at an estimated \$100 million. In the 2001-2002 six-month import season, exports slipped to about 120,000 head but were valued at more than \$60 million. The effects of drought, tight feed grain supplies, and the disruption of BSE lessened Canadian imports of U.S. feeders in subsequent years, but the new import protocol offers the potential for significant increases in future years once North American live bovine trade returns to normalcy.

The details of the announcement follow:

"OTTAWA, March 10, 2004 – The Honourable Bob Speller, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and Minister responsible for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), today announced that the CFIA will be introducing new rules to significantly increase year-round access for feeder cattle imported from the United States into Canadian feedlots. Feeder cattle are animals that are finished during a feeding period before being slaughtered.

Effective April 1, 2004, the new rules remove anaplasmosis and bluetongue testing and treatment requirements from all feeder cattle imported from the U.S. Bluetongue and anaplasmosis are livestock diseases found in the U.S., but not in Canada. Neither disease poses any risk to human health.

U.S. feeder cattle from 39 states considered to have a low incidence of bluetongue will be able to enter Canada directly without testing. Feeder cattle from the remaining 11 states, which are considered to have a high incidence of bluetongue (see below) are also not required to be tested, provided they reside for at least 60 days prior to import in a low incidence state. Testing, however is still an option and should the feeder cattle be found free of bluetongue, the 60-day period will be waived. Historically, these high incidence states, all of which are southern, have not exported significant numbers of feeder cattle to Canada. Canada's classification of bluetongue incidence is based on disease surveillance data provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

New scientific information and Canadian controls at feedlots lower the risk of bluetongue and anaplasmosis spread from imported animals to Canadian livestock and wildlife. As an added precaution, the new import rules require Canadian feedlots that import U.S. cattle to maintain risk mitigation measures, which include segregation of imported feeder cattle from breeding stock, identification and movement restrictions.

"We continuously strive to ensure that our import policies protect food safety and animal health without being overly restrictive," said Mr. Speller. "Based on emerging science and consultation with stakeholders, we have determined that

Canada can open its border to U.S. feeder cattle, providing certain risk mitigation measures are in place."

"The CFIA will strictly enforce the requirement that imported feeder cattle are identified and tracked. Looking ahead, Canada will continue to monitor this and other import controls, making adjustments as required," added Mr. Speller. The new import rules stem from extensive consultation with provinces, territories, industry and other stakeholders. Canada has liberalized its import policies for U.S. feeder cattle several times over the years.

Neil Jahnke, president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA), welcomed the announcement. "The CCA fully supports this policy revision. Canada's approach puts in place appropriate measures to mitigate the risk of disease spread, while acknowledging the integrated nature of the markets north and south of the border," said Mr. Jahnke.

Recognizing the integration of the Canadian and American livestock industries, both countries have expressed a commitment to work together toward harmonizing disease management policies. In this regard, the CFIA and the USDA have already initiated discussions regarding the recognition of areas of equivalent health status for brucellosis, tuberculosis, bluetongue, and anaplasmosis that may be applied against additional categories of cattle and other livestock. Moving ahead, animal disease experts from Canada and the U.S. will collaborate to develop coordinated approaches where feasible.

List of U.S. States Designated High Incidence for Bluetongue: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas. "

End of Press Release.

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